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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION; US REACTION TO CHAVEZ'S ANTI-BUSH RALLY IN ARGENTINA; CHAVEZ'S LAND SEIZURES; CHINA'S ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF PRIVATE PROPERTY; 03/27/07; BUENOS AIRES

1. SUMMARY STATEMENT

International opinion pieces today are mainly focused on the USG's reaction to Venezuelan Hugo Chavez's anti-Bush rally in Buenos Aires; Venezuelan President Chavez's land seizures; and China's acknowledgement of private property.

2. OPINION PIECES

- "The US complaint over Chavez's rally was a well-calculated reaction"

Ana Baron, Washington-based correspondent for leading "Clarín," writes (03/27) "According to a USG official, 'the US Department of State has long sought to have a good relationship with Kirchner. We put up with criticism during the Mar del Plata Summit of the Americas and also with the fact that he never thanked us for the help we gave him during the (Argentine) economic meltdown. However, Kirchner went too far when he allowed Chavez to lead a rally in Argentina while Bush was in Uruguay.'

"According to the source, US Under Secretary for Political Affairs Nicholas Burns' statements were not a personal rebuff but a change of policy that signify the cooling of bilateral ties.

"The source adds, 'First and foremost, it is the first time in a long time we have a strong ambassador in Argentina. Wayne is not the kind of person who is there only to say nice and diplomatic things, but just the opposite. He came up with the idea to make a formal complaint for what he considers unacceptable behavior. Since Wayne was not able to call Bush, he discussed it with US Ambassador to Uruguay Frank Baxter, and Baxter fully agreed with him.'

"... 'Just when Bush was landing in Uruguay with his delegation, Baxter passed it on to Dan Fisk, Western Hemisphere Director at the National Security Council, in front of Burns. And they decided to do something about it. Bush and Rice were furious.'

"According to the source, US Assistant Secretary for Western Hemisphere Affairs Tom Shannon was not able to prevent the complaint from occurring.

"... The source pointed out that the Bush administration still thinks that the relationship between Kirchner and Chavez is basically one of convenience due to (Venezuela's) purchase of Argentine bonds.

"'Nevertheless, when Chavez planned the rally, Kirchner should have said no. It is absolutely infantile to say 'I did not take part in organizing the rally. The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo were the ones who organized it.' That's stupid. The truth is that, after all this,

Kirchner is weakened and, in the eyes of the Bush administration, he totally depends on Chavez.'"

- "Hands on lands"

Michael Soltys, executive editor of liberal, English-language "Buenos Aires Herald," writes (03/27) "Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez doubtless spends sleepless nights trying to think up new ways to be the wild man of the Americas and land seizures would seem to be his latest stunt, judging from last weekend.

"Not that such confiscations are a total novelty in Venezuela - something like two million hectares have been seized since Chavez became president in 1998. But this figure includes something like a third of a million seized in one day last weekend at gunpoint. Perhaps that is why Chavez has been purchasing so much weaponry in the last three years - perhaps he needs to arm a peasants' revolt.

"Where these land seizures are heading is hard to say - it is merely handing over idle land to the landless, as Chavez claims, or is there a more ideological agenda of collectivization, even 'kolkhoz-ization' of Venezuelan agriculture afoot? Whatever is happening, it is definitely a question of 'Watch this space.'

"If indeed Chavez is thinking of introducing the kolkhoz collective farms of Stalinist Russia into Venezuela, he has yet to convince Venezuela's Communist Party of Stalinist vintage to merge into the new United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PUSV), into which all Chavez supporters are now being dragooned. This is not so much a party as an anti-party - designed to stifle all debate in favor of the single thinking of a single person: Chavez."

- "China's historic reform"

Daily-of-record "La Nacion" editorializes (03/27) "China has just

taken a transcendental step in its road toward the full implementation of a market economy by having approved a reform recognizing private property. This change demolishes one of the fundamental pillars of China's prevailing collective ideology ever since the emergence of the Mao-Tse-Tung-led Communist regime in 1949.

"The legislation approved by China's National Popular Assembly is a substantial step towards the reinforcement of capitalist reforms introduced in 1978 and in the protection of private economic interests, which are the main reason for the economic growth achieved by the country during latest decades...

"The legislation, which will be in force in October, states that the government-owned, collective and individual property 'are protected by law and no one can infringe on them'...

"Even when many and more profound economic, political and human rights-related reforms are still required in a country that is becoming one of the engines of world economy, the recognition of private property deserves to be welcomed as a major breakthrough since it will consolidate the capitalist amendments introduced by Beijing's Communist regime."

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